

## SEES BUILDING REVIVAL AHEAD FOR NEW YEAR

Materials Lower in Cost, Wages Adjusted and Credit Easier.

BY JOHN M. GRIES  
Chief Division of Building and Housing  
Department of Commerce.

The building industry during the year 1921 has reached the soundest position which it has held since the war. Judged by contracts awarded, building was nearly at a standstill at the first of the year, but made a good recovery, and now, at the end of the year, is holding up strong. But two years ago industry was in a period of unhealthy activity, prices and wages were rising, labor was scarce and credit was tight. The building industry was being held for speculative rises, and in some cases an actual shortage existed. The transportation difficulties were adding to the confusion and the cost of obtaining loans was excessive.

Today conditions are different. Building costs have fallen, while construction activity has greatly increased. Industry has been through a period of depression, the curve of prices deflation has been flattening out, and wages have tended downward following commodity prices. There is no shortage of labor (notwithstanding the occasional strike in certain trades), the efficiency of labor has notably increased in most places, the builders are increasing the efficiency of their management, the railroads appear able to meet any demand the floor plan industry may make on them, and the easing in the money market must counter or later reach prospective builders.

The plant capacity of the producers of the principal building materials is not adequate, and even with much greater building activity there is little prospect of a "runaway" market like that of 1920. Builders are not apt to show excessive haste under the present conditions, which will probably prevail, and any tendency toward a rapid rise in prices will readily be checked. There may be increases in certain products, but the general picture is one of a reasonable advance in the price of some of the better grades of lumber, but any great inflation of building material prices seems out of the question.

The figures for contracts awarded, as shown by the F. W. Dodge Company, which were at a relatively high point in the early months of 1921, showed a decline first in the amount of the contracts and then in the number, reaching the lowest point in December of that year. January 1922, showed an improvement. Measured in floor space, April, May, and June showed an index of 74, and July, August, September, and October, respectively, with 100 for the 1919 monthly average. The index for July dropped to 85, while August was up to 75 and September to 90—higher than any month since April, 1921. October was 87 and November 81. The corresponding figures for the same period in 1920, a drop took place in July, 1920, to 60, a slight increase in September, then a steady decline to 41. The figure for November, 1921, is 81, almost double that of November, 1920.

In many years the various groups in the industry looked largely to the construction of new buildings, but in the last few years the groups have been more or less local, and the practices developed in the last few years have been more or less local. The groups have been more or less local, and the practices developed in the last few years have been more or less local. The groups have been more or less local, and the practices developed in the last few years have been more or less local.

The American Institute of Architecture has taken an active interest in the small building problem. The Architects Small Building Service Bureau of the United States, organized by the Institute, has been active in the building of small houses, which are being built in the country and in the cities. The American Institute of Architecture has taken an active interest in the small building problem. The Architects Small Building Service Bureau of the United States, organized by the Institute, has been active in the building of small houses, which are being built in the country and in the cities.

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## Moral 'Watch Dog'



JAMES E. ARMITAGE.

James E. Armitage, new Democratic member of the board of public safety, is expected to become the "watch dog" of the morality of the police and fire departments. Mayor Sharrill designated him for appointment. He has repeatedly stated that he will never vote to retain a man on the police or fire departments convicted of drinking, winking at law violations, neglecting duty. He resides at 232 North Illinois street and operates the Winston billiard parlors. He has been extensively engaged in real estate operations for many years.

from \$25 in the spring of 1920 to about \$15 in November of that year. The production and shipment of cement have been increasing and the prices have been falling. There is no need to expect a shortage in cement production, although the road building programs will call for large quantities. Calling the price of Portland cement at New York 100 for 1913 the index for August, 1920, was 326; in August, 1921, it was 175, and the price is lower today.

There is a shortage of approximately a million homes in the United States. With the decline in the cost of building in the last few months many houses have been built. The two principal reasons why few houses were built were the difficulty of financing the prospective home owner and the high cost of building. The cost of building has fallen very materially and the money market is easier. That there is a market for more houses is evident from reports received from more than 4,000 building and loan associations in the United States. From many cities reports were received by the Division of Building and Housing that thousands of persons, who were able to make a satisfactory cash payment had sought loans to build homes. The building and loan associations were unable to supply. As long as prices of building materials were falling there was much hesitation about building, but with the steady rise of prices more persons are ready to build.

Judging by contracts awarded the greatest improvement in 1921 over 1919 was found in hospitals and institutions, which were more or less local, and the practices developed in the last few years have been more or less local.

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## Everyone to Begin Year With \$7 in Savings to His Credit

Individuals May Not See Money, but Treasury Experts Know About It.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2.—Every woman, man and child in the United States began the new year with a direct saving of seven dollars in Federal taxes, which, during 1920, will expand to four times that sum.

Under the new revenue act, which became effective Jan. 1, 1920, 000,000 in taxes is lopped from the budget. But experts of the Treasury Department today stated that four times that figure will accrue to the taxpayers due to the peculiar operation of the economic law.

Many of the changes in the revenue act will not benefit certain classes of taxpayers until 1923. But the average wage earner effected an immediate saving in his income as well as in other taxes. Under the new act the head of a family is exempt up to \$2,500, instead of \$2,000, and \$400 for every dependent instead of \$200. This reduction is retroactive to incomes during this year.

Other changes effective Jan. 1 were: Repeal of the 8 percent Government taxes on passenger and Pullman fares, 3 percent on freight rates, express and parcel post taxes.

Elimination of the "nuisance" taxes, such as the pennies paid at soda fountains, on cosmetics and like taxes. Repeal of the insurance taxes.

Reduction of the taxes on candy, cream, cigars and works of art. Changes in luxury taxes beneficial to the consumer.

## Burbank Will Divulge New Plant Creations to World

Wizard Promises to Introduce Several Developed Products During 1922.

SANTA ROSA, Cal., Jan. 2.—The new year will mark a new era in the life of Luther Burbank, internationally renowned plant wizard.

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## Sarah Inaugurated



MRS. SARAH SHANK.

Sarah, beloved of all the followers of her husband, Mayor Samuel Lewis Shank, and respected by all who know her, took up her duties as a Democratic member of the board of park commissioners this afternoon. Mrs. Shank was placed on the board by Mr. Shank to see to it that some of his pet projects for the establishment of playgrounds and swimming pools are carried out.

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## MORE THAN 100 REFORMATORY SITES OFFERED

Relocation Secretary Has Proposals From All Directions.

More than 100 proposed sites for the relocation of the State reformatory now at Jeffersonville have been offered M. E. Foley, secretary of the relocation committee, said today.

Many sites of less than 1,000 acres have been received by the commissions secretary but it is the desire of the commission to have the new reformatory large enough so that it will pay for its self in the future and not depend entirely on the State for support.

Among the new sites proposed to the commission are: Decatur County, two miles south of Greensburg, 1,240 acres which can be obtained at from \$200 to \$250 an acre, owned by Elmer M. Bull.

Vigo County, extending into Clay County, fifteen miles from Terre Haute, 1,100 acres which can be obtained at from \$150 to \$200 an acre, owned by W. A. McBeth.

Miami County, 1,200 acres, price not mentioned, by William F. West. Martin County, 1,220 acres, one mile from Shoals, can be purchased for \$100 an acre, owned by John B. Knece.